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ABSTRACT

The summaries of seven research projects concerned with the universal availability of publications (UAP) which are presented describe (1) a literature review on the availability of book materials through commercial channels, particularly in developing countries, by John Clews and others; (2) a concomitant survey, by Priscilla Oakeshott, of libraries, publishers, booksellers, and book trade associations throughout the world, which collected information on problems associated with the availability of publications through the commercial book trade, particularly in developing countries; (3) a comparative study of existing national acquisition systems and possible acquisition models, by Judith Collins and Ruth Finer; (4) a comparative study of national repository plans and possible repository models, by Don Kennington; (5) a comparative study of national interlending systems and possible interlending models, by Maurice B. Line and others; (6) an overview of the international lending of publications and the requirements of an international supply system, by Maurice B. Line and others; and (7) a pilot study of acquisition and interlending policies in two unnamed countries, and the general availability of publications within these countries, by Stephen Vickers. (ESR)

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INTERNATIONAL CONGRESS

ON

UNIVERSAL AVAILABILITY OF PUBLICATIONS

Paris, 3-7 May 1982

SUMMARY OF RESEARCH OF THE UAP PROGRAMME

Background Document N. 1

IR050131

General Information Programme
and UNISIST

United Nations Educational,
Scientific and Cultural
Organization

International Federation
of Library Associations
and Institutions

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INTRODUCTION

This document summarizes a number of research projects undertaken within the UAP programme. It does not include background information fron other sources except in so far as such material was used in the preparation of the individual reports. It is upon this research that much of the Working Document of the Congress is based; a degree of repetition, particularly of more theoretical considerations, is therefore inevitable.

The studies of commercial book supply national interlending systems, the international provision and supply of publications, and the availability of publications in individual countries were financed by Unesco. The studies of national acquisition policies and systems and national repository plans and programmes were financed by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft.

The research was controlled by the IFLA International Office for UAP. Certain projects were undertaken by this Office, while others were sub-contracted to other parties.

The titles and authors of the various original studies are as follows:

Commercial Book Supply: The availability of book materials through commercial channels, with particular reference to developing countries. 1. Literature review, by John Clews, with Brian Kefford and Maurice B. Line, 2. Survey of Libraries publishers and booksellers, by Priscilla Oakeshott; National Acquisition Policies and Systems: a Comparative study of existing systems and possible models, by Judith Collins and Ruth Finer; National Repository Plans and Programmes: a comparative study of existing plans and possible models, by Don Kennington; National Interlending Systems: a comparative study of existing systems and possible models, by Maurice B. Line, Antonio A. Briquet de Lemos, Stephen C.J. Vickers and E. Sidney Smith; the International Provision and Supply of Publications, by Maurice B. Line with Brian Kefford and Stephen Vickers; the Availability of Publications in Individual Countries: a pilot study in two countries, by Stephen Vickers. The variety of authorship is reflected in the presentation of information in the research reports and hence in these summaries prepared by Stephen Vickers.

At the time of producing the present summary, the following documents were available free of charge from Unesco: National Interlending Systems: a comparative study of existing systems and possible models, document PGI/78/WS/24 (Rev.), in English only; The International Provision and Supply of Publications, document PGI-81/WS/30, in English, French and Spanish texts forthcoming. The study National Acquisitions Policies and Systems: a comparative study of existing systems and possible models is forthcoming and will be available for sale from the British Library Lending Division.

It is hoped that other studies will be published in due course.

The views expressed in this document do not necessarily reflect Unesco's views.

March 1982

TABLE OF CONTENTS

		Page
1.	Commercial book supply: the availability of book materials through commercial channels, with particular reference to developing countries. 1. Literature review	1
2.	Commercial book supply: the availability of book materials through commercial channels, with particular reference to developing countries. 2. Survey of libraries, publishers and booksellers.	7
3.	National acquisition policies and systems: a comparative study of existing systems and possible models	14
4.	National repository plans and programmes: a comparative study of existing plans and possible models	22
5.	National interlending systems: a comparative study of existing systems and possible models	29
6.	The international provision and supply of publications	39
7.	The availability of publications in individual countries: a pilot study in two countries	46

COMMERCIAL BOOK SUPPLY: THE AVAILABILITY OF BOOK MATERIALS THROUGH COMMERCIAL CHANNELS, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. 1. LITERATURE REVIEW.

INTRODUCTION

The study is particularly concerned with book supply to libraries, although any discussion of the book trade inevitably includes many general aspects. The report is the product of an extensive literature survey. It places special emphasis on developing countries, insofar as this is possible: there are far more works dealing with developed than with developing countries. The report is based as far as possible on current information, though inevitably in a number of instances less recent information had to be used as the latest available. Newspaper publication and distribution are not reviewed, except where they affect book supply to libraries.

The study treats the characteristics of commercial book supply, factors affecting the viability of commercial book supply in developing countries, both general and special types of publishing, distribution, and acquisition of books by libraries. It is supplemented by an annex of statistics of book production.

CHARACTERISTICS OF COMMERCIAL BOOK SUPPLY

The publisher brings the author, the printer and the bookseller together by providing the capital for each publication and by supervising its production, and gathers the profits (or underwrites the losses) on each book published.

Publishing differs from other industries in the very large number of different products (ie titles) offered, and in the great variation in the number of individual products sold.

Authorship, particularly in developing countries, is usually a part-time activity. Many authors outside the main publishing countries prefer to be published by major publishers in the developed countries, because they offer more opportunities for publication and because these publications make a larger impact. Authors from developing countries suffer from a higher rejection rate from publishers in developed countries, at least in the field of scientific journals.

Most printers in developing countries need to import equipment and supplies. A steep rise in paper costs during the 1970s has led to lower print runs, particularly in centrally planned economies and developing countries. Many developing countries have the necessary raw materials for papermaking, but development costs are very high. Many developing countries in Asia have scripts for which mechanized printing equipment is not available.

The retail bookseller is the main outlet for most publications. In some industrialized countries wholesalers act as an intermediary between publishers and retail booksellers. Most booksellers are based in towns, and rural populations

particularly in developing countries, often have very limited access to books.

Mass distribution of books through stores that also sell other goods, and postal distribution through direct sales and book clubs, have both expanded recently, particularly in industrialized countries.

These two forms of competition have led to a reduction by some booksellers in the choice offered to customers because fewer titles are stocked.

FACTORS AFFECTING COMMERCIAL BOOK SUPPLY IN DEVELOPING COUNTRIES

The absence of established local traditions in publishing and writing and low levels of literacy, education and purchasing power all adversely affect publishing in developing countries.

Distribution networks are often inadequate. There are few retail outlets, particularly in rural areas. Transport facilities are often poor and costs high. Transport systems are underdeveloped because of the lack of resources and of trained personnel. Most international transport routes link developed and developing countries, rather than developing countries with one another.

Although worldwide telecommunication links have increased rapidly, the gap in technology between developed and developing countries is one reason why some new developments such as the electronic journal have limited application in developing countries.

COMMERCIAL PUBLISHING

In industrialized countries most trade books are sold in hardback editions through retail bookshops. Trade publishers expect to sell all copies of each of their titles within a few years, and many do not therefore publish titles of minority interest.

Many mass market publishers concentrate on selling few titles at a low retail price in very large editions through a large number of retail outlets. This practice has spread the book buying habit in many industrialized countries.

Textbooks are often sold in large quantities, and can be an important source of income to publishers, some of whom have a large export market in developing countries.

Children's books form only a small proportion of total sales, but sell much more consistently than adult books over a long period. Libraries form the biggest single market for children's books.

In most industrialized countries title output has risen consistently, and the proportion of paperback titles continues to increase. A few industrialized countries are net exporters of books. At the other extreme, local publishing may suffer because of penetration by transnational publishers.

In most centrally planned economies, there are relatively few, albeit large, publishers who produce their thematic plans according to production targets

set by a single state body. Demand tends to outstrip supply, partly because shortages of paper and printing capacity limit the size of print run. Imports and exports are regulated by a single state agency. There is not the same distinction between trade books and mass-market paperbacks as in industrialized countries. Textbooks and children's books are both produced in very large editions.

Developing countries have a need to improve all aspects of commercial book supply, especially by strengthening manufacture and improving distribution. Availability of paper and printing capacity requires improvement and there is a great need for training in the book trade.

Publishing for mass distribution exists in some developing countries. Western models of mass distribution have been successful in towns, but the only schemes to penetrate rural areas have combined mass production with postal book clubs or village library schemes.

Textbooks tend to dominate publishing in developing countries. Children's books, which are important if reading habits are to be developed and maintained, are often in short supply.

SPECIAL TYPES OF PUBLISHING

In industrialized countries many scholarly books are published by university presses and similar bodies, which may be subsidized by the parent body. In all industrialized countries, a high proportion of sales of scholarly books is to libraries. Increased paper and printing costs have led to the adoption of new production methods, particularly for small print runs. These include the use of camera-ready copy, or reproduction on demand.

In centrally planned economies specialist scholarly works are published mainly by the appropriate state publishing house. Short print runs reflect shortages of paper and printing capacity rather than lack of demand.

On-demand publishing of research reports is well developed.

In developing countries few universities outside Africa and South East Asia engage in scholarly publishing. Some undertake their own printing. Only limited use has been made of newer methods of publication.

Many university presses concentrate on publishing textbooks. Sales of scholarly books are mainly limited to libraries and university bookshops, and few are sold outside the country of publication.

In industrialized countries, journals are an important sector of publishing, particularly for scholarly publishers. Production procedures are similar to those for books, but editorial control often involves independent refereeing. Distribution is usually direct from the publisher or through a serials agent rather than through the retail book trade. Relatively few copies are printed in excess of known demand, so that replacements soon become unavailable. Libraries and institutions form the largest market, although cost increases and budget reductions have led them to reduce spending.

In the centrally planned economies, particularly the USSR, journal publishing is changing from publication of institution-oriented sborniki to subject-oriented journals.

Most journals in developing countries are infrequent or irregular, sometimes with small sales. Many are in former colonial languages in order to attract maximum sales. However, distribution systems are poor, and many publications make a loss.

Most governments in industrialized countries have a large and varied publishing programme. Some material may be sold through the retail book trade.

Government publications form a substantial proportion of library acquisitions. Some countries have centralized much of their departmental publishing and distribution through a central agency, although in most countries some items, particularly non-conventional literature, can be obtained only from individual government departments. Some government agencies use commercial publishers to publish on their behalf; this can achieve wider distribution.

In centrally planned economies, official publications are issued through commercial publishing houses. They tend to be less numerous than in industrialized countries.

Few developing countries have a centralized government publisher, and their official publications may not be made available direct to the public. In some countries a Ministry of Information or similar focal point and the news media are relied on to inform the public. Although many developing countries have an official government printer, such printers often have no distributive role.

DISTRIBUTION

The retail book trade is the backbone of distribution in industrialized countries. Fixed retail prices with standardized discounts to booksellers have become the norm. The availability of books through other channels such as library suppliers and book clubs has reduced profits in retail bookshops.

Paperbacks are often sold in newsagents and supermarkets as well as in retail bookshops. Book clubs offer their members a limited choice of titles, at reduced prices. Simultaneous publication of book club and trade editions can reduce costs and retail prices for books. Many booksellers have felt competition from book clubs.

The growth of libraries has led to specialist library suppliers, which may offer discounts and/or services such as binding, cataloguing and labelling.

The abandonment of retail price maintenance in some industrialized countries has led some booksellers to stock fewer titles, and publishers to reduce their lists. In a few industrialized countries imported books are also sold at fixed prices. In some countries publishers and/or booksellers have combined to organize a wholesale distribution system, although there are independent book wholesalers in most countries. Teleordering (electronic ordering) systems are being implemented in several countries to reduce supply times.

In centrally planned economies most retail and wholesale book distribution is in the hands of one organization, although journals are sold through a separate organization. Retail prices and profits are low. Book clubs offer books at reduced prices, but have additional social and educational functions. Mail order is used mainly to serve rural readers far from bookshops. Library supply agencies handle a substantial part of library acquisitions.

In developing countries distribution is the weakest link between the author and the reader. The most effective distribution systems have either used existing newspaper distributors or been set up by publishers themselves or by missionary organizations. Many rural areas can only be served by mobile bookshops or one-man shops which sell mainly school textbooks. Mass marketing is mainly urban-based and rural distribution is a major problem. The high cost of postal services prevents postal book clubs from reaching their full potential. Use of publicity and trade booklists is often inadequate.

Large sums may be spent on publicity for individual books in industrialized countries.

Booksellers are usually offered a substantial discount by publishers; this is often higher in developing countries than elsewhere. Wholesalers are offered higher discounts than retailers, although there are few nationwide wholesalers in developing countries. Discounts are also commonly given to schools and libraries, and occasionally to other groups, or category of purchaser.

Only a few countries allow prices to be fixed for imported books, although publishers sometimes fix for imported books, although publishers sometimes fix or recommend prices within traditional market areas. More commonly, booksellers apply a standard mark-up to the cost of imported books.

Delays in supply can be frustrating; wholesalers can sometimes supply books to retail booksellers more quickly than publishers. The supply of imported material requires a choice between relatively cheap but slow surface freight, and fast but expensive air freight, though some airlines and post offices offer concessionary air freight and airmail rates for books.

ACQUISITION OF BOOKS BY LIBRARIES

In industrialized countries most library books are acquired by purchase. Libraries are making increased use of automated acquisition and accounting. Some booksellers and publishers offer approval plans and blanket order schemes to libraries. Libraries in industrialized countries rely less on the international exchange of publications for foreign acquisitions than in centrally planned economies and developing countries as it is more costly in terms of staff time than purchase. Cooperative acquisition schemes are sometimes used, especially for books from developing countries.

Centrally planned economies stress the need for coordination of acquisitions and use international exchange extensively to obtain foreign material

In developing countries readers depend heavily on libraries to meet their book needs. However, acquisition of library materials is beset with difficulties. The poor organization of the book trade in many developing countries makes

acquisition of indigenous books very difficult, and imports cause even greater problems.

Besides the lack of resources, the most common problems in developing countries are associated with the distance from overseas publishers and suppliers, and the consequent supply delays and high costs. High mark-ups by local booksellers and the limited number of titles they stock may deter libraries from using them, especially as books may be obtained more quickly if imported direct; however, difficulties in obtaining foreign currency and other import restrictions may prevent libraries from doing this. Delays and losses are common with imported library materials.

Most journals have to be imported by developing countries: the problems of acquiring these are similar to those for books only more acute. They include the need for prepayment, fluctuations in exchange rates and slow postal systems. Replacements for copies not received may be impossible to obtain.

International exchange of publications is sometimes used by libraries in developing countries, but libraries find it difficult to achieve parity with exchange partners, and useful partners are usually limited to those who share the same language. Parity is less important for official publications, but many exchange partners may be required to achieve comprehensive coverage because of the decentralized nature of government publishing.

Legal deposit laws exist in most countries, but enforcement is difficult and many books fail to be deposited in developing countries. Government publications are more widely deposited, but these are frequently put into exchange stocks because demand for them is low.

Gifts can be useful, especially where the receiving library can negotiate what it is to receive and the donor does not attach awkward conditions. Unnegotiated gifts usually bring more costs than benefits. In some cases, membership of organizations enables their publications to be obtained free or at a reduced price.

Cooperative acquisition schemes have not really succeeded in developing countries because of conflicts between cooperative and institutional needs and inequalities between members of cooperatives.

Purchasing trips to developing countries are frequently made by librarians in industrialized countries; the costs saved by purchasing locally can substantially offset travel costs. Purchasing trips by librarians from developing countries might be particularly worthwhile in neighbouring countries, to circumvent unsatisfactory trade and communication links.

Although libraries form the largest market for books after educational institutions, publishers often do not effectively target their sales to libraries. Equally, librarians often do not make the most effective use of services offered by publishers and booksellers. In developing countries, the development of libraries and schools is a major stimulus to the growth of publishing. The growth of indigenous writing, publishing, bookselling and libraries can be improved by local cooperation between these sectors.

COMMERCIAL BOOK SUPPLY: THE AVAILABILITY OF BOOK MATERIALS THROUGH COMMERCIAL CHANNELS, WITH PARTICULAR REFERENCE TO DEVELOPING COUNTRIES. 2. SURVEY OF LIBRARIES, PUBLISHERS AND BOOKSELLERS.

INTRODUCTION

This survey complements the literature review. It reports the findings of a survey of libraries and book trade organizations, aimed at identifying the problems experienced by libraries in obtaining publications through normal commercial channels. Particular emphasis was laid on the need for data from developing countries, though industrialized countries were also included both to provide a 'bench-mark' and to ascertain which problems related to book supply in general and which to particular areas, languages, levels of economic development or other pertinent factors.

The survey was conducted by means of a questionnaire compiled in three different versions: for libraries, for publishers and for booksellers in English, French and Spanish. Particular emphasis was placed on areas of significance that were not expected to be covered by the literature review.

Questionnaires were sent to 307 libraries in 143 countries. In each country (with three exceptions) two libraries were selected; wherever possible one of these was a public library and the other institutional (academic or special). As the book trade as such was not the subject of investigation fewer countries were surveyed for publishing and bookselling and two addresses in each country were used. 103 questionnaires in all were despatched to publishers or, where possible, to their trade association in 51 countries, and 108 questionnaires to booksellers or again where possible to their trade association in 55 countries. Six of the developing countries were selected for deeper coverage and six questionnaires were sent to each of the three categories.

The total number of questionnaires despatched was 518 and usable replies numbered 97 (19%) in all they comprised replies from 60 libraries in 51 countries, 19 publishers in 13 countries and 18 booksellers in 15 countries. The library sample was considered to be large enough to produce valid results while the book trade section is necessarily more impressionistic. In all cases however the figures must be treated with caution, particularly since a number of respondents stressed that they could give estimates only; the results must throughout be considered as indicative, not definitive.

LIBRARIES

Type of library

34 of the responding libraries were institutional and 26 public.

Expenditure on acquisitions

Annual expenditure varied widely, from under US$5000 up to over US$1,000,000, depending partly on their clientele and functions; expenditure does not

necessarily reflect the size of population of a country nor the numbers engaged in tertiary education. Legal deposit of national imprints does little to reduce the need to purchase. Economic development and levels of literacy were no guide to the funds granted. Nor was there any clear division between the regions of the world or between expenditure by public and institutional libraries; even public libraries serving state, sub-national or national needs do not necessarily get larger funds. In general the older libraries in industrialized countries tend to receive more money, but expenditure by some university libraries in developing countries is also high.

Imports as a percentage of expenditure

The percentage of expenditure on imports is high not only in developing, but also in most developed countries. The need to import is greater in countries with small indigenous outputs, but the ability to import publications is greater in developed industrialized countries. There is heavy dependence on imports by libraries in all countries at all stages of development for books and still more for journals. Exchange is used mainly for foreign publications and for journals, but appears to be used only when there is no alternative; although it is still highly regarded by the CPEs and developing countries.

Holdings

Rank order of the holdings of the libraries shows that, with some exceptions, they roughly parallel expenditure. This underlines the fact that library budgets do not reflect the size, age or needs of the library but only the funds at its disposal.

Sources of supply

A number of different channels are used to acquire material. They are determined in part by geographical location, level of trade development and simple experience. The bulk of indigenous books appear to be bought through the local book trade; direct supply from publishers accounts for most of the remainder. The local trade is also used to supply some foreign books, but in general foreign suppliers are used. Journal subscription agents tend to handle the majority of the journal trade. As would be expected, the countries where the book trade is long established local servicing of national and foreign publications is common, but use of the local trade is also high in developing countries, possibly as a result of local import regulations and currency controls. Direct acquisition from publishers seems relatively low. It is surprisingly low for journals where direct trading is conventional practice; the bulk of journals appear to be bought through intermediaries. Direct supply of indigenous books is not high, but it is surprisingly high for imported books, given the problems likely to be encountered.

Factors determining the choice of supplier

Among factors determining the choice of suppliers, efficiency is seen to be of overwhelming importance, followed by centralized ordering, speed, discount, currency problems and ease of documentation. On-approval, cataloguing and

binding services, reduced mark-up and concessionary post or freight rates were considered important by only a few libraries. However, no particular pattern emerged between these factors and the suppliers chose, when a choice was available.

Countries from which foreign publications are obtained

The UK and USA were by far the major sources of books of all kinds, followed after a considerable gap by the Federal Republic of Germany and France. Otherwise the circulation of foreign books occurred almost entirely within regions of the world. The same broad pattern applies to journals. For both books and journals, the historical pattern of dependence on publications of former colonial powers is declining and is being replaced by the dominance of the language of publication.

Official involvement in book supply

Several countries reported various aspects of government involvement in commercial book supply. A few are restricted as to choice of supplier, but this would seem to present no particular problems. Government tendering schemes are more common, but again are without apparent detriment. Foreign currency limitations, an obvious obstacle to imports, were noted by many developing countries; in view of this, the use of Unesco coupons is surprisingly low.

Obstacles to obtaining publications

The major obstacles to commercial book supply seem to be lack of information and unavailability, particularly for indigenous publications. These problems are by no means limited to developing countries; they are also of significance in industrialized countries. Credit problems were placed next in importance, particularly for imports. Lack of currency and import formalities came next, notably in developing countries. Inadequate delivery services were also seen as a slightly greater problem for imports. The least serious problem, even for imports, was considered to be loss or damage in transit. Other problems identified include the general insufficiency of funds, difficulties in remitting payment and distance from the major publishing centres.

Failure rates and speed of supply

The percentage of publications ordered which are never supplied was, for many libraries, very high. This applies to indigenous and imported publications. The pattern is similar for both books and journals. Factors mentioned include distance from the source of supply, customs formalities and inadequate air facilities. The majority of comments relate to lack of information and unavailability, particularly for indigenous publications issued by small publishers in short print runs with less sophisticated publicity. However, most publications are eventually supplied if available. The total time between placing an order and receipt of the material is generally good, but can on occasion be very long indeed. Imports are slower and show a much wider spread between possible minimum and maximum times. Internal postal services can add considerably to delays.

Exchange and interlibrary loan

Interlibrary loan and, to a lesser extent, exchange are used to supplement commercial supply, but in general exchange seems to be used only as a last resort.

Sources of information for purchasing decisions

The major influences on purchasing decisions are reviews, publishers' catalogues and readers' recommendations. National bibliographies were ranked next, though they do not exist in all countries, followed by subject lists, prospectuses and advertisements. Publishers' representatives were considered least important.

PUBLISHERS

National book development organizations

National organizations for book development exist in a number of countries, but are by no means universal. Though their activities may vary, all would seem to be generally concerned with ways and means to improve conditions for publishers and the book trade. A number are involved with cooperative book promotion and staff training.

Rights activities

The transfer of publishing rights can be an important means of supplementing indigenous publication. In some countries there is a control agency acting as a channel for copyright and contractual negotiations, though in most countries this is in the hands of individual publishers. The sale of rights is difficult to monitor, while editions resulting from buying rights should be evident in (eg) national bibliographic records. At present such activity seems to be limited in most countries, as does co-production deals between countries. Problems associated with selling rights relate primarily to lack of contact and limited interest of local titles. Shortages of funds and staff were not reported as major obstacles, but inadequate knowledge of contractual and technical aspects could be a barrier. Major problems associated with buying rights are the high financial terms asked for and a lack of information on suitable titles. Currency difficulties, delays in reply and protection of original editions are of less importance.

Printing life

In general school texts are relatively short-lived, while university texts and professional books expect a longer life, as do general fiction and non-fiction books. Printing capacity would seem to be less of a problem than the shortage of paper.

Export of indigenous publications

The export of indigenous publications seems to occur mainly in the field of fiction. Exports are sent by surface mail for low cost and by air for speed:

the cheapest methods are generally preferred. Air services are used by some developing countries for their reliability.

Government involvement in publishing

Publishing activity can be affected directly and indirectly by government action. Price-fixing is generally left to the publisher, though in a number of countries it is determined by government, sometimes for particular categories such as text books. Government approval prior to publication is needed in a number of countries, though this is usually restricted to text books, which are thus safe and profitable, having steady and assured sales.

Trade practices and organization

International Standard Book Numbers are not universally adopted, nor are trade journals giving bibliographic listings of books published in all countries. Similarly national directories of publishers are lacking. Most information about publications is clearly left to the individual publisher.

Not all countries have publishers' associations, and where they do exist they are not always associated with international trade associations. No particular activities were reported other than the general ones of promoting members' interests.

In most cases publishers expect to train staff mainly on the job. Training is rarely seen as the function of the trade association; more often this is a responsibility of the national book development organization. Foreign study visits tend to take place on an occasional rather than a regular basis.

BOOKSELLERS

Trade outlets

Most countries have not only a widely ranging number of stockholding retailers, but also some system of wholesalers. Most retailers are privately owned, with occasional government involvement. In almost all countries some of the retailers handle journal subscriptions. Library suppliers are found in a number of countries. These often handle journal subscriptions though most countries also have other agents for this category. In many countries it is difficult to assess the number of outlets, as there are many one-man operations and mixed-trading outlets selling books alongside other goods.

Prices and discounts

In comparison with the replies from publishers, booksellers showed more involvement than anticipated with price control. A publisher may, except where retail prices are legally controlled, merely recommend a price which may or may not be observed by the bookseller. Discounts may be given for bulk purchases and as 'loss-leaders' to encourage additional sales. Most retailers give discounts

to some customers, such as libraries, students, teachers and professionals, though in some countries they may be limited to the trade.

Extra costs associated with special orders are usually passed on to the customer. Mark-up on imported publications to cover the extra costs of importation may either be standardized or set by the government, sometimes in combination with the book trade, or it may be left to the book trade as a whole or to the individual importer. In many cases the mark-up is the actual cost involved, but it may be increased by a particular percentage or by converting the original foreign price at an artificial exchange rate.

Methods of ordering and supply

Booksellers tend to order indigenous publications by mail, usually surface mail, though airmail is sometimes used. The use of computerized ordering systems is at present limited. Greater use is made of airmail for ordering imports but surface mail is also widely used despite the delays it incurs. Airmail is used for speed, urgency and in some countries for reliability. Telephone and Telex are also used for more urgent orders. Surface transport is used to supply publications though again airmail is sometimes used. In general the supply time for indigenous publications is good and the maxima quoted are significantly below supply times quoted by libraries; the reasons for this difference are not clear.

Trade practice and organization

Training of staff is carried out mainly on the job though there is also some involvement by trade associations. As with publishers, foreign study visits tend to be occasional rather than standard practice. Again as with publishers, trade associations are not universally found, nor where they exist are they necessarily active and effective. Activities tend to centre on promoting members' interests, negotiating with publishers and with governments.

THE FUTURE

A number of libraries anticipate reorganization leading to rationalization and possible budgetary increases. The development of regional cooperation was mentioned, notably in Africa and South East Asia.

The book trade's hopes for the future lie in the formation of national book organizations, more emphasis on childrens' books and greater production by local authors for local readers. However the hard core problems are likely to remain. Delays and difficulties in transport hamper distribution, especially exports. Continuing rises in costs and prices of materials, transport and all other elements continue to cause increases in prices, while inflation is also eroding purchasing power. These problems are felt in industrialized and developing areas, though they are exacerbated in the latter.

CONCLUSIONS

Book production, distribution and purchase are almost unique, in that they are concerned with a large number of individual items and each purchaser rarely wants more than one copy. Markets are unpredictable. Extremely wide distribution and an internationalism means that many books are marketed worldwide; this creates additional problems. Institutional purchases account for a very significant proportion of all sales.

Book production and supply serve a variety of functions: to develop and maintain literacy, to educate children, to enable adults to keep themselves educated, to occupy leisure pleasantly and profitably, to keep citizens informed of policies and developments relevant to them, to provide government, industry and organization of all kinds with information needed for technological, economic and social progress, and to further research. Most aspects require a concentration on material in indigenous languages, while some require a large amount of material in foreign languages as well.

The problems associated with commercial book supply include: the small market for many kinds of publications in many countries and the dangers of over or under-production; the lack of sufficient availability of paper and other raw materials; the lack of authors, and the preference of many in developing countries to be published abroad; the lack of purchasing power both of individuals and of libraries in many countries; the difficulty of identifying and obtaining much non-professionally published material; the shortage of retail outlets in many developing countries, particularly in rural areas; the need to import significant quantities of material and associated import quotas and tariffs, customs regulations and currency restrictions; delays in transport, which may be considerable in developing countries and between countries; and the lack of adequate publicity and bibliographic control.

Book supply is intimately bound up with the well-being of a country. Indigenous publishing in most countries (and probably some developed) countries needs to be extended and improved. The development of publishing needs to be accompanied by improvements in transport and communications, an increase in the number and efficiency of retailers and the removal of unnecessary and harmful barriers to the movement of books between countries. An increase in the size of the market in developing countries requires the growth of publishing and the improvement of distribution. Good publicity is vital to the development of book publishing and supply. Publishers, retailers and libraries are poorly organized to achieve cooperation and concerted action and may be unaware of ways to improve operations and services. Greater government involvement is required and external aid will be needed in some countries. An integrated national plan is needed.

NATIONAL ACQUISITION POLICIES AND SYSTEMS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF EXISTING SYSTEMS AND POSSIBLE MODELS.

INTRODUCTION

This study attempts to define and identify national acquisition policies and describes the elements of policies and systems that need to be considered by national policy-makers. Current practices are described and used to derive a series of basic models of national acquisition policies and systems.

Two different but interdependent methodologies were used to obtain the information on which the report is based: a literature review back to 1950, and a survey by questionnaire and correspondence. An initial body of literature was identified and reviewed and this was supplemented by a broader search for references, using secondary sources and searching certain journals issue by issue. The results of this search showed a great paucity of concern with and discussion of the topic. While small, local schemes are relatively well documented, descriptions from a wider perspective of national policies and systems have been neglected. In order to gain a more complete and accurate understanding, librarians known to be aware of this issue in 21 countries were asked by means of a questionnaire based on a number of basic aspects of current practice, to provide further information. 95% of the letters were answered, although some correspondents gave more emphasis to certain areas of enquiry than others.

The report presents definitions of a national acquisition policy and a national acquisition system. A consideration of the role of national libraries is followed by an outline of acquisition programmes in practice. The mechanics of acquisition systems are considered and models are proposed.

DEFINITIONS

A national acquisition policy creates the programme through which the nation's library resources are gathered and controlled in order to be made available. It prescribes formally the organized collection of resources intended for the nation's use (and maybe beyond). A national acquisition policy is promulgated by a national body, which may be a central authority or may be, for example, a council formed by cooperative agreement between executives. An important distinction must be made here: the acquisition policy of a National Library is not necessarily a national acquisition policy. However, National Libraries play an important part in any consideration of national acquisition. In fact most countries do not have a national acquisition policy.

A national acquisition system is a planned and explicit set of procedures and practices which covers either the actual mechanics of fulfilling the acquisition policy, or the procedures and practices for acquiring library materials in the absence of a policy. Where there is no acquisition policy in a country the national acquisition system becomes of paramount importance and may, if it is based on a sound and long-established footing, reduce the need for an explicit policy.

THE ROLE OF NATIONAL LIBRARIES

The presence of a national acquisition policy does not depend on the presence of a National Library or Libraries, although where a national policy does exist one might reasonably expect the National Library to participate if not lead in its formulation, development and implementation. The acquisition policy of the National Library could be central, peripheral or playing a minor but equal part with other libraries in the overall scheme. It might be a library of first, last or only resort.

In view of scientific, technical and publishing developments in the twentieth century the traditional role of the National Library as preserver of the nation's heritage has come to be reappraised in many countries.

Some old and some new National Libraries attempt to maintain comprehensive coverage of materials in all subject areas and from all parts of the world. Many of the older established National Libraries give priority to in-depth collecting in the arts, humanities and social sciences, while special libraries serve other subjects in detail. Where circumstances permit, the national library may also assume responsibilities in the fields of science and technology.

In many developing countries the trend is towards national information and documentation centres in particular subjects.

A wide variety of institutions with different histories, different lines of development and different functions exist under the name of 'National Library'. Some are single organizations covering the spectrum of activities from archival and repository responsibilities through inter-library lending to documentation and information services. Some focus on the national heritage, some embrace foreign materials comprehensively. Some are encyclopaedic in coverage, others serve a limited subject area.

The term 'National Library' is often applied to organizations which may also serve other functions. Given this wide variety, it is not surprising that the acquisition policies of national library systems range from pivotal to incidental so far as any national policy is concerned.

ACQUISITION PROGRAMMES IN PRACTICE

It is evident from the literature that in practice acquisition policies are in a close and complex relationship with interlibrary lending. On a pragmatic level an acquisition policy may aim to acquire material that will be in high demand. However, the availability of a wide-ranging, efficient and cost-effective inter-library lending service may make local acquisition of medium- and low-usage material less necessary. Countries with a low publishing output tend to have greater need for foreign materials than for national imprints.

Acquisition policies reflect tradition, politics and above all pragmatics, with philosophy often assuming a minor role. In few countries is there a comprehensive acquisition policy on a national scale in which achievements meet stated

objectives. However, within many countries arrangements exist on an informal and usually sub-national level, often arising spontaneously between related libraries rather than being administered by an authority.

Groupings of libraries co-ordinating their acquisitions may be defined by a variety of criteria of different types and so are not mutually exclusive. The basic categories are:

- libraries within a particular geographical area;
- libraries of a particular type, i.e. National/Academic/Research/Special/Public;
- libraries covering a particular area of knowledge.

Obviously countries with developed and well-supported library systems are able to foster arrangements for coordination and cooperation in an entirely different way from countries with, say, few libraries, poor provision for acquisition from overseas (including lack of foreign currency) and wavering government support. Coverage of the policy may be determined by subject, form of material, level, language, country of origin, date and perceived likely usefulness. Practical influences (eg finance) are likely to be as important in the ultimate decisions as philosophical ones, and the choice of the criteria themselves will reflect existing provision and predicted needs.

The prospect of attempting to acquire every significant item (however 'significant' is defined) from every source in every language and regardless of form is daunting. In many circumstances a good case for this cannot be made. If a user library knows it has reasonably fast and cheap access to less frequently used source material outside its own country, it sees no need for domestic acquisition of the material.

Centralization and Decentralization

The organization of libraries tends to reflect the ethos of a country. Countries with a federal constitution or regional orientation tend to be concerned with regional as well as national sufficiency. Countries with a tradition of centralization, on the other hand, can accept more readily a system based on a single, national resource.

When only one institution is involved, its objectives can be worked out simply and its systems designed and monitored accordingly. There should be no conflict between priorities and no problem of definition of coverage. There is one source to which libraries can apply, whatever the subject of a request. It is fairly easy to build up a central collection of heavily used serials which will satisfy, say, 80% of total demand. A centralized system can generally offer faster access and supply.
In many countries financial resources may not be available to establish a new central unit, and/or it may prove impossible to amalgamate existing collections if they belong to different (private) organizations. Countries which could afford a new unit might in any case prefer to build on existing strengths or

might find a central solution impossible because of a federal structure. Where there is a network of libraries, each tends to be based on a strong historical collection and can concentrate more fully on the acquisition of current material for the particular discipline(s) covered. Distribution of responsibilities allows a high degree of specialization, and the libraries concerned can be supported by subject specialists in their parent institutions.

Systems of Regional Libraries

Large countries, where distance is seen as a constraint on accessibility, are also likely to develop parallel systems in their states or regions, whether within a national framework or not.

However, politics, geography and attitudes are not necessarily the only influencing factors. Cooperation between libraries is well established in most countries, and it is not surprising that groups of libraries combine at a local level to share experience and pool resources, in an effort to exploit their collections to mutual benefit.

Multi-National Networks

Responsibility for providing access to less used material could be share between a number of countries. Such multi-national library schemes have the best chance of success, where there is a tradition of formal economic and political co-operation between countries. The question then arises as to the relationship of the national acquisition policy of a member country of a multi-national network to its supra-national responsibilities. Each must accommodate the other, but it is not clear whether the national policy should always take precedence; nor may it always be possible to design a multi-national policy that is totally compatible with national practice and that fills gaps without requiring new national systems.

Systems of Subject Libraries

On the continuum from one central source of document supply to complete decentralization the first stage is a system of national subject libraries.

Most countries have networks of discipline-oriented special, research or university libraries, but the degree of formality varies.

A network could be established in which nominated specialist libraries would have acquisition and lending responsibilities at a national level.

University Library Networks

In many small and developing countries university libraries are a major element in the national library system. Their acquisition policies are significant for the country as a whole.

THE MECHANICS OF ACQUISITION SYSTEMS

Whatever groundwork is done, and however rational an acquisition policy may be, its effectiveness in the end depends on the actual mechanics of its systems. In a country with an established system of libraries particular attention has to be paid to the machinery for implementation of the policy and to compatibility with existing practice.

Preconditions

In most countries present circumstances are far from encouraging for the introduction of national acquisition policies and systems which are to be workable and useful in the long term.

A cooperative spirit may be lacking; libraries may be jealous of their autonomy (this is true of both developed and developing countries); and there may be groups with different ideas about the organization of a national system. Various ministries may be ultimately responsible for the development of library and information services in different sectors. The size of the country and ineffective postal services may be significant constraints. The level of literacy may be low, particularly in the languages of much of the world's output of research literature. Regional considerations may include ethnic orientation and different languages, as well as independent attitudes. There may be only partial collections of domestic imprints and no workable legal deposit system. No funds may be available for foreign exchange. The interlibrary loan service may be inefficient. It may be impossible to guarantee consistent funding over a long period and library development may in any case be a low national priority. For many countries only a limited policy is a practical proposition.

The Policy - Content

Obviously no general prescription can be given, because each country has its own national values and political structure, economy and pattern of library and information provision. One would expect current serials to form the core of most acquisition programmes, with an emphasis on subject areas in which a country's industry and/or research specializes. Monographs, 'grey literature', non-printed media, ephemeral materials of all kinds, and retrospective gap-filling all tend to be incorporated into a programme after it is well established. The relative emphasis that is laid on domestic and foreign imprints depends on a composite picture of domestic publishing, languages, place in the world research league and availability of foreign exchange, as well as political constraints such as censorship. However, the objectives of programmes may be stated in terms of a relationship between production and predicted needs.

The System - Method

Unless a system is totally centralized, the coverage of the acquisition policy has to be divided up in some way amongst participating libraries. This may be by subject, country of origin, language, date, type, or perceived usefulness. Most forms of division will encounter problems and will not necessarily best serve the needs of users. Informal arrangements may simply stress deeper

coverage of existing interests. Decisions have to be made as to which libraries are to be involved - for example, those supported by government funding, those with a strong tradition of cooperation, those already serving large numbers of users, or existing centres of excellence. The choice must depend on the particular circumstances of the country concerned.

Mechanics of Collection

For the collection of domestic imprints legal deposit is common, but its reliability varies greatly; few countries would claim to have complete coverage. In most countries it is the publisher who is responsible for depositing the requisite number of copies, but in some cases the printer and/or the author are involved. Deposit laws themselves also vary in coverage. Outside standard purchasing procedure, for foreign publications international exchange is relied upon quite heavily by some countries, particularly those with problems of foreign currency. One method used successfully to acquire foreign publications with the minimum of effort is blanket purchase.

Another method used is the acquisition tour, in which librarians visit a particular country or group of countries from which they wish to ensure good coverage of relevant publications, and select and order what they want at source.

Special methods need to be employed for retrospective acquisition, using antiquarian book markets, reprint or microfilm programmes and, if there is no other way, photocopying.

Mechanics of Distribution

There are two practical prerequisites for an effective national acquisition system. One is good guides to resources; and the other is a good interlibrary loan system. The existence of collections alone is not sufficient.

Monitoring the Policy and the System

If a policy is to cater for current needs it must be monitored continuously. A feedback system is needed whereby unfulfilled loan or photocopy requests are notified to a central unit so that an overall picture can be gained. Effectiveness of the interlending system itself is also important. Mechanisms should be built in that enable unpredicted demands to be met reasonably quickly.

MODELS OF NATIONAL ACQUISITION SYSTEMS

Introduction

In many countries, while a planned national acquisition programme may be thought eminently desirable by the library and research communities, the development of library services may be a very long way down the government's list of priorities. It is difficult to see how a workable system can be established without government support and, more important, financial backing.

Context

The introduction of a national acquisition policy and system requires simultaneous consideration of other library and information functions. For the design of any system to have a chance of being effective, it must be tailored to meet identified needs under given conditions. As the relationship between those conditions and needs is unique to each country, so must each country's solution be unique.

There are various basic methods of organizing national acquisition systems to meet the objectives of the national acquisition poli y, some of which reflect existing practice. A mixture of methods is likely in most countries.

1. Provision may be the responsibility of a central collection of second resort (ie after the local library). Such a collection may serve a single country, or it may be designed for a group of neighbouring countries. It would aim to meet a high proportion of demand (85%). Alternatively, in a country with limited financial means and relatively low demand the collection could be limited to a core of heavily used journals. Reference functions would normally be fulfilled by a separate institution or instititons.

2. Provision may be concentrated on perhaps four or five central subject libraries, whether these are established for the purpose or existing libraries designated as having national functions. In many cases these could cater between them for most of a country's research needs. In developed countries with established libraries the system could be based on existing centres of excellence. University libraries would play an important role in developing countries, which are more likely to adopt a gradual approach, while developed countries are more likely to attempt more comprehensive coverage at the outset. Additional funding would be needed either to create such collections or to allow existing libraries to be developed to fulfil national responsibilities. Coordination of subject responsibilities and the definitions of boundaries are very important.

3. An alternative to division by broad subject category would be the distribution of responsibilities at a regional level, possibly with a central unit of last resort. Such a solution requires large regional libraries to act as a first back-stop to local provision and to co-ordinate acquisitions and interlibrary lending within the region. Unsatisfied requests can be channelled to other regions and finally to a central unit of last resort. Regional libraries would be supported in part by the region and in part by central government. Such a solution would be very costly in total as it would result in a high level of duplication. However, regionalization, other than as a result of political structure and/or national ethos of decentralization, may be suitable in very large countries, in countries with poor communication facilities, and possibly in countries in which library provision is plentiful and a strong tradition of regional cooperation already exists.

Such a model can be adopted to fulfil multi-national functions, with one central library serving as the unit of last resort for a grouping of countries with close links. Each country would coordinate its acquisitions with the other members of the group, for example by taking account of the particular interests and specialist collections of individual member countries.

4. A system could be based on decentralized allocation of responsibilities. This does not require the establishment of new collections, but builds on existing strengths, conferring national status on or giving national responsibilities to selected libraries. The division of responsibility may be by subject, country of origin, language, date of publication, form of publication etc.

   The most common division is by subject, but this is bound to encounter problems, such as the overlapping of fields whose boundaries are not clear cut and are in any case liable to change with the growth of knowledge. Nor does subject division necessarily best serve users, as related materials may be scattered. Decisions also have to be made to which libraries are to be involved. The greater the number of libraries, the more complex the programme. A strong central organizing and coordinating body is essential. Such a scheme may be suitable in countries with a relatively large number of medium-sized libraries and a strong tradition of interlibrary lending.

   The report includes a set of guidelines that may be of help to those involved in making decisions about national policies and systems. They are presented in the form of a series of questions, the answer to which will indicate which of the elements of the models would be appropriate, and more important, workable. The questions relate to political structure, spirit of cooperation, existing resources, the existence of an effective interlending system, the administration of library services, level of domestic publishing, financial restrictions, use of foreign sources, and the existence of a national information system.

NATIONAL REPOSITORY PLANS AND PROGRAMMES: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF EXISTING PLANS AND POSSIBLE MODELS.

INTRODUCTION

The report is generally restricted to the organizational and management aspects of repository planning. It does not examine in detail subsidiary aspects such as optimal relegation models, cost analyses, technical innovations and buildings, though references to these issues were identified and are included in the bibliography of the main report. The prime concern was the identification and description of the strengths and weaknesses of existing systems. Information was collected from a detailed analysis of recent literature (mainly post-1960), from replies sent by 59 senior librarians in 38 countries in response to a standard letter, by personal contact and by visits to repositories.

There seems to be little consensus among librarians and administrators as to the cost-effectiveness and practicality of any particular model to suit an individual country's requirements. Optimal solutions capable of universal adoption are not a practical proposition. They key factor is that each country needs to take a positive position on the issue and adopt a systematic approach.

Most responses were received from developed countries. Those from less developed countries generally indicated that repository planning was not yet a central issue.

DEFINITIONS

All libraries serve, to a greater or lesser degree, the functions of storage. The repository function is the preservation of publications for a long time, or indefinitely, to serve future users as practised by libraries, archives and other information centres. The importance attached to this function will vary: national, academic, research and major public libraries are much more likely to attach importance to it.

Very few libraries serve solely as repositories; libraries may achieve a repository function in cooperation with one another by sharing storage facilities, or by allocating the retention of material among themselves or they may jointly own a common repository in which stock may be commonly owned and integrated or kept in separate sections with ownership retained by the depositing library.

Repositories may be national, regional or local. Transport and communications facilities will play an important role in determining which is regarded as local. There is little consensus as to what constitutes lesser used material. It is not synonymous with old or older material though this criterion is often applied; ageing does not necessarily mean obsolescence. Material seldom asked for in one library may be in constant demand in another. Demand and use are conditioned by exploitation: material held in a passive repository will quickly exhibit the symptoms of low use although in a dynamic library it might still be in regular use.

Repositories may be 'active' or 'passive'. By passive is meant those repositories which have a purely storage function. An 'active' repository is one which would be closely linked, at least to the national interlending function and possibly play a part in national acquisition policies.

REVIEW OF CURRENT PRACTICE: RESULTS OF THE SURVEY

Shared or cooperative repositories are less common than repositories serving a particular library. Many cooperative repositories are not truly integrated, and some stock remains the property of the original library. Cooperative repositories were found in nine countries; some of these had a hierarchical system of national, regional and local repositories - sometimes linked, as in the USSR, and sometimes independently organized, as in the USA. At least 19 of the countries surveyed had some storage facilities, sometimes belonging to the National Library, sometimes in the field of university libraries.

About 35% of the countries surveyed indicated plans for repositories. They are at varying stages of development and the level of priority attached to them also varies.

Where repositories exist they seem to have a mainly passive role. Slightly over half participate in the interlending system of the country and many fewer have a positive acquistion function. Some 16 countries have positive programmes for the disposal of duplicates both internally and to other countries, be they formal clearinghouses, as in the USA and Canada, or the National Library, as in New Zealand.

There is an almost complete lack of statistics of use. Almost all respondents reported that no statistics were kept or that they were not easily obtained. Management information on the performance of repositories is thus not available. Assessment of the effectiveness of repositories is therefore very difficult and will create difficulties in future planning. The relinquishing of ownership is a major practical difficulty in many countries. Many librarians link the prestige of their office with the size of their collections. Moreover, the image of repositories does not seize the imagination in the same way as some other more dynamic aspects of librarianship.

Substantial economic benefits are generally assumed to be a major advantage of storage libraries. This is held by some to be not proven. There is very little accurate information on costs that can help to decide whether, when and how to relegate material. Nevertheless, it is possible to show by analysis that some forms, such as a single national repository with simple systems and duplicates removed must be cheaper than others such as several regional repositories.

Other unresolved issues are the need for union catalogues of the holdings of repositories and the depth of cataloguing in any union catalogues that exist. Their production can improve access but may add considerably to costs.

There is relatively little evidence of the development and use of innovative storage methods. If land and building costs are not high little need is felt for the compression of documents into the minimum of space. Microfilming

original material is less economic than storing originals.

The issue of relegation is also a key problem area. Opinion on what constitutes less-used material is divided. A certain amount of research has been conducted in this area, but more factual information is needed.

Remote storage in rural areas is practised in some countries, such as Finland, Norway and Sweden, though this presents staffing and transport problems. Many prefer to site repositories close to or even attached to a main library, as with the National Library in Vienna; this will often be associated with high land costs, though existing buildings may be modified, as is proposed in the German Democratic Republic.

KEY FACTORS

The willingness of librarians to relinquish ownership is a key factor. Librarians may feel they are abdicating direct responsibility for permanent conservation if they pass control to a third party. They may fear that material will be lost or not easily obtainable when required and that a reduction in their own stocks may lower their prestige. The formulation and acceptance of better performance and output measures may help overcome this. In many countries librarians may be unable to relinquish ownership because of strict accountability for material held and the policies that control the initial purchase of material. Legislation or the major modification of regulations may be necessary.

A second factor is the provision of appropriate buildings by an appropriate agency. Obviously repositories cannot be created without buildings provided by some government body (or similar) or jointly by libraries.

A third factor is management capability. Competence in conservation and the ability to retrieve and rapidly deliver material are vital, as is the ability to handle large amounts of widely disparate material.

A fourth issue is what to relegate. The ease or difficulty of the decision and the costs involved are crucial to cooperation in any programme.

A fifth factor is user needs. Demands from local users to retain direct access can create pressures that are difficult to ignore. The balance between economic considerations and convenience to users is still a matter of debate.

THE ORGANIZATION OF REPOSITORIES

Repositories may be national, regional or local. Considerations other than library needs may dictate the choice. While a single national repository covering all subjects may be an ideal solution, a federal constitution may require repositories at the state level, as seems probable in the Federal Republic of Germany.

Size of a country is another factor that may preclude a single national repository. In the USSR a highly structured hierarchical system based on the Lenin

State Library has been adopted, with national and Republic repositories and zonal repositories covering regions in the larger Republics.

The existence of local storage may encourage librarians to utilize a shared repository facility, especially if they are allowed to retain ownership. Readers can travel to the repository and access can be provided within one day, as at the University of London Depository.

Poor postal systems constitute a major disadvantage with a single national repository. Many librarians also fear concentration on one source, in particular its vulnerability to natural or man-made disaster.

In general librarians especially where national libraries are the main proponents, prefer repositories to cater for all subjects, rather than their being based on subject specialization, which appeals more to subject specialists.

The need for conservation is of paramount importance. Unique, last copies must be retained in good enough condition to allow access to be afforded to the information contained in them.

While conservation and permanent storage are important factors, the material is nevertheless retained for use. While successful relegation policies of low-use material should result in low borrowing figures it is clear that repositories should be closed linked to interlending systems. Provision from a central store can release considerable amounts of space at individual library level.

The disposal of duplicates by repositories is possible only if ownership of material is relinquished. In Britain some 75% of material at the University of London Depository remains the property of the original institution. Material discarded to the British Library Lending Division, if not added to the loan stock, can be distributed to other libraries in the United Kingdom and abroad. In other countries, such as the USA, there is a separate agency for handling duplicates.

Few countries seem to recognize a link between a repository programme and gap-filling in national collections. Few countries also have the resources to acquire material that might be transferred directly to a repository. Some repositories such as the US Center for Research Libraries (CRL), have carefully designed selection policies and will only accept certain types of material, which has to be catalogued by the donating library. The CRL accepts material only at times of its choosing, to ease its work load; a reduction in the work load of participating libraries might encourage more to participate.

The question of management and control of repositories does not apply when they are merely appendages of one library. When more than one library is concerned management becomes a more complex issue. Management may be directly responsible to the department from which funds are obtained, or may be in the hands of a board of participating libraries or representatives of parent institutions with proportional powers based on contributions or use.

Many librarians and administrators see a repository serving all types of library as impractical because of the different types of material to be included. Integrated resources can however be more cost-effective and there should be no difficulty in providing space for different types of library, since the same typesof physical material are being stored. However agreement to serve different types of library may be difficult to secure if different ministries are involved.

MODELS

The main aim of repositories is to save money; by avoiding unnecessary duplication, by extending the range of material available, by using accommodation on cheaper land and by using cheaper storage methods. Individual libraries may gain in space, make better use of purchasing funds if the repository is linked to a common acquisition policy, and catalogues may be less bulky and simpler to use. These possibilities are open to individual libraries working in cooperation, though the difficulties of achieving and maintaining a programme of dispersed cooperative acquisition and retention are substantial. Alternatively the State may consider repositories to be an essential part of library and information policy and act accordingly. Other possibilities exist between these two extremes.

A diversity of solutions must be expected to a set of problems which are seen in different ways. On the basis of the facts and considerations presented, a number of basic models may be identified.

1. A separately administered, national, centralized repository may be established to which all libraries would be required to send literature which met particular criteria, eg older than a stated term of years, unused for a stated period, etc. Compliance with this requirement would be monitored. The acquisition policies of individual libraries would be planned to accommodate subsequent transfers of stock and, where necessary, ordinances or local laws would provide for the necessary transfer of ownership. The repository would handle all material sent to it, and this would minimize the work required at individual libraries. The features of such a system are: (a) considerable central direction; (b) considerable loss of action by individual libraries; (c) probably substantial national and local cost savings; (d) a clear-cut, easily understood system which would provide a one-stop location for materials which came within the criteria adopted; (e) a clearinghouse for duplicate disposal and national interlending base could be grafted on to this model relatively easily; and (f) international cooperation would be facilitated through a designated focal point for document delivery. Such a system would seem to be particularly suitable for smaller countries with centrally planned economies, and for less developed countries wh re library resources are not well developed and existing patterns not set into routines which are incapable of adaptation and change.

   Alternatively a nationally based system could be more flexible, allowing all libraries to send material which they regard as little used (by their own criteria) or for which they no longer have space to a national store as they wish. A sub-option of this model might provide for the

retention of ownership of materials sent to the repository for a set period of time to allow for any change of mind by librarians should subsequent demand for deposited items require their return; this would allow cruder selection at the first stage of disposal and so save money. Such a repository could be separately managed or it could be part of the National Library, whether a separate department or integrated into the main stock (unneeded duplicates having first been removed). The features of this model are: (a) less central control; (b) greater freedom for individual libraries; (c) considerable cost savings (though less than in the previous model); (d) a less clear-cut system for locating materials; and(e) possibilities for some duplicate disposal and international cooperation.

Such a system would seem best suited to small to medium-size developed countries with non-federal political structures, with substantial library resources and well-established patterns of information provision where changes to the systems for storage are possible and desirable, but where such changes are likely to require considerable changes of attitude (and possibly also of local regulations and laws)

3. A third system would involve the establishment of a coordinated network of local and regional repositories to handle all types of literature within predetermined geographical areas. Such provision would recognize geographical, transport and communications difficulties, and also the likelihood of attaining a reasonable level of self-sufficiency in literature provision in each area. Deposit could be mandatory or voluntary and a sub-option for retention of ownership could be offered if required.

   Such a model would (a) require little central control and (b) possibly afford better local access to material; but it would be expensive to organize and maintain. There would be considerable duplication if materials between repositories, and at the same time many requests for deposited material would have to go to more than one regional repository before being satisfied, unless an expensive union list of the holdings of all repositories were constructed.

This model would suit medium to large developed countries whose users demand local access and where the additional resources needed to provide for this could easily be found. It is likely to require coordinating facilities from a single national government or statutory board. These countries which have, or could provide, such coordination are likely to find it more appropriate.

4. A fourth possibility is the distribution of the repository function among several, perhaps many, libraries, each of which assumes or is given a responsibility for retaining, or receiving from other libraries in the system, items in given categories (eg by subject, or language country of publication). This option may be national, regional, or by type of library (eg academic). Capital costs of construction may be saved, and collections with existing strengths can be further reinforced in this way. However, the costs of organization and retrieval

may be very high in relation to the benefits attained. There may also be problems in determining precise responsibilities among participating libraries, especially if there is no overriding authority.

This model could meet some, if perhaps not all, of the repository needs of developed countries, with substantial existing library resources and where governmental influence is extremely limited or non-existent. It could also serve as an interim development in some countries until one or other of the alternative models suggested can be provided.

NATIONAL INTERLENDING SYSTEMS: A COMPARATIVE STUDY OF EXISTING SYSTEMS AND POSSIBLE MODELS.

INTRODUCTION

This study attempts to evaluate current interlibrary lending practice and proposes various models of interlibrary lending provision. A major review of the literature was undertaken, but there are few comprehensive accounts of current practices and their effectiveness.
Without this information it is obviously difficult to comment with any certainty on the relative effectiveness of different types of system.

The study outlines the elements necessary in an interlending system and assesses the possible impact of technology on interlending. Factors relevant to the design of systems, and criteria for judging their effectiveness, are presented. Current practices are summarized as far as possible and in the light of such information potential basic and combined models are suggested. Factors telling against efficient systems are enumerated, and the relationship between national interlending systems and other elements requiring national policy decision making are identified. The mechanics of interlending are also briefly considered. On the basis of these findings conclusions are drawn and further studies are recommended.

Access to documents has lagged far behind improvements in bibliographic control. IFLA's programme of Universal Availability of Publications (UAP)is an attempt to correct the balance. Most countries have interlending practices that have grown up over the years. There are very few adequate descriptions of interlending systems, and only in very rare cases is it possible to build up a clear picture of the structure of interlending, to estimate demand, or to assess performance.

ELEMENTS OF A NATIONAL INTERLENDING SYSTEM

Collection of documents. It is obvious that documents cannot be lent unless they have been acquired. Existing holdings of libraries in a country are rarely adequate for the supply of documents wanted on interlibrary loan. They may be supplemented by cooperative acquisition schemes or by a central loan collection or collections. The difference between cooperative and centralized resources are fundamental to interlending systems.

Machinery is needed not only for acquisition but for the retention of documents withdrawn by libraries.

Means of locating documents. There are three main means of locating documents:

(a) By union catalogues. These are the commonest and often the only means of access to library holdings. They may be comprehensive or limited in various ways. They may be published, unpublished, or maintained by computer. Problems include currency, coverage, difficulty of use and cost.

(b) By directing requests to specialized libraries, or to more general libraries with strong resources in special fields, in a more or less formal manner. Specialized schemes may be associated with local specialist demand or coverage may be divided on an arbitrary basis. Such schemes are likely to be closely connected with national or cooperative acquisition programmes.

(c) By directing requests to central loan collections, with more or less comprehensive acquisition of given categories of material.

Procedures for requesting. Though an essential element, these are not greatly affected by nor do they greatly affect the total interlending system. Concentration on one or a limited number of sources of supply facilitates the use of standard forms and procedures.

Procedures for supplying. Since speed of supply is affected by procedures in the supplying library, they are more clearly related to the design of the system.

Communications. There must obviously be effective means for transmitting requests and documents. Mechanisms for transmitting requests include mail, road transport, telex, telephone, facsimile transmission and computer. The latter show promise for the future, but mail and Telex are likely to be the main methods for the immediate future in most countries. For transmitting documents, mail, road transport, and schemes combining the two are the main alternatives. Facsimile transmission costs are likely to continue to prohibit its widespread use. Electronic transmission from machine-readable document stores such as videodiscs, will develop but will affect only a minority of documents in the foreseeable future.

THE IMPACT OF TECHNOLOGY ON INTERLENDING

The main technological changes likely to affect interlending are:

Possible changes in the pattern and form of publication. These include publication in microform, which is used for a minority of publications, publication in summary form (eg synopsis journals), which may prove to be a better alternative to microform, though it has yet to become acceptable to authors, high density storage such as holographs, bubble memories and crystals all of which are still at the experimental stage, and the on-line "electronic journal", which could radically affect library use, though it is unlikely to supersede large circulation journals and monographs.

Changes in locating, requesting and supplying documents. The main technological developments are facsimile transmission, which is too slow and costly for all but a minority of requests, television technology, other forms of document transmission (eg satellite - though its use within countries is hard to justify in economic or other terms), and computer technology. The last is likely to have the greatest impact, though it requires the development of systems and the provision of terminals, can provide access to only a limited proportion of documents required, and will not in itself make publications available.

FACTORS RELEVANT TO THE DESIGN OF INTERLENDING SYSTEMS

These include geography, though this is less important than the communications system and distribution of population; constitution, which may preclude centralization; stage and nature of development; education and research, both of which will influence the volume and nature of demand; communications; book production, as local availability will be better in the more productive countries, library resources, as developed countries may be prepared to make available substantial additional resources, while developing countries may have to maximize existing resources; and, especially, copyright law, as most interlending demand tends to fall on journal articles which can be satisfied by photocopies - these are better for the user and cheaper for the supplier and additional requests can still be satisfied from the original though any need to seek permission from publishers or payment of royalties may cancel out these advantages.

CRITERIA OF A NATIONAL INTERLENDING SYSTEM, AND FACTORS AFFECTING PERFORMANCE

The three main requirements are:

adequate satisfaction level (proportion of requests satisfied)

adequate speed of supply

lowest costs for achieving adequate satisfaction and speed.

Subsidiary criteria are:

ability to monitor demand and performance

ease of use

Satisfaction level. This is defined as the proportion of actual requests satisfied. The number and nature of requests may be constrained by expectations of the system. If a low satisfaction level is set as an aim, improvements may never be reached. 70% satisfaction within a country seems to be a reasonable minimal aim. Below this level users are likely to be frustrated, and borrowing items from abroad that are likely to be wanted more than two or three times becomes more expensive than acquisition. The heaviest interlending demand in most countries is likely to fall on journals, science and technology material, and on recent and common materials, although in developing countries books may account for most demands. The highest percentage of total failures is likely to occur with items in low demand that are not held in the country, and items in high demand that may be in use at the time of requesting. A system devoted solely to recent scientific and technical journals should be able to satisfy a significant proportion of all demand in developed countries.

Speed of supply. Only rarely do supply periods of longer than one or two weeks (but less than three or four weeks) seriously inconvenience users, but provision has to be made for cases of real urgency (supply within one week). Speed is more important for scientific and technical material, especially journals. First-time success is a very important determinant of speed. It is influenced by the

ability to locate a copy, the probability that it is available, and willingness to lend it. Unless communications systems are very slow, the most serious delays usually occur not in transmission but in the requesting and supplying libraries. A request met too late should be considered a failure. Expectation of slow supply can influence the volume and nature of interlending demand.

Cost. Costs may be direct or indirect, recurrent or capital; they may be differently perceived by requesting libraries and in national economic terms. In comparing systems, all costs should be taken into account. If high satisfaction and speed targets are set, central loan collections are the most cost-effective. Lower targets can be attained at less cost by different systems.

Ability to monitor is important if the system is to be made, and to remain, responsive to changing needs.

Ease of use may be significant in that systems that are hard or cumbersome to use discourage demand.

FEATURES OF EXISTING INTERLENDING PRACTICES

Union catalogues are universal, though their number and coverage vary enormously. Union lists of journals are much commoner than of books. Some union catalgues are published, often in microform.

Direct requesting to libraries holding required items is common.

Centralization may take the form of a union catalogue centre through which requests are directed, or the source of supply may be centralized. Except in the United Kingdom, only limited examples of the latter exist.

Regional organization is not uncommon, especially in federal countries.

Circulation of requests, among libraries or union catalogue centres, is practised in several countries.

Subject specialization may be planned as an element in interlending, or exist as a result of cooperative acquisition schemes, or occur by virtue of the existence and nature of particular research institutions.

Hierarchical structure, with requests going through different levels or channels in a prescribed order, is a feature in some countries.

Most countries have a focus for interlending, usually associated with the national library, but often it is not clear where responsibility for the supervision of interlending lies.

It appears that satisfaction rates often do not exceed 70% and supply times of 3 weeks or more are a norm rather than an exception. Costs seem likely to be generally high.

MODELS OF NATIONAL INTERLENDING SYSTEMS

Several basic factors are involved: degree of centralization; national or regional (sub-national); hierarchical nature; unity of provision for all libraries; unity of provision for all types of literature.

The basic factor used for the definition of models is the degree of centralization. Four basic models are identified:

Model A. Concentration on a single library A single collection, possibly dedicated to interlending, on which interlending demand is concentrated. A dedicated collection would probably have to be built up specifically for the purpose, but it could gather older material from other libraries and also serve as a national repository. A shared library (perhaps a national library) would combine lending to other libraries with a service to its own clients. Despite savings in duplication, there is a danger that its two services may conflict.

For journals, a central collection of 8,000 - 9,000 titles may satisfy 90% of demand, and 5,000 - 6,000 titles satisfy 80%. The number of books required to reach different satisfaction levels is much harder to determine: an intake of c. 100,000 a year might be sufficient to satisfy 80% of demand.

The advantages of concentration on a single library are:

a single channel for most requests;

ready response to demand;

easier provision of national imprints and marginal material;

low direct costs of handling requests;

economical for libraries to use.

The main disadvantages are:

high costs of setting up and maintaining;

high unit costs per request unless demand is heavy;

possible uncertainty as to future financing;

risk of damage to collection;

possible danger of a monopoly;

possible unleashing of "unnecessary" demand.

Model B. Concentration on a few libraries. In many countries, most titles are contained in a few libraries, on which interlending demand might be concentrated, and which would be reimbursed for lending. Their routines would have to be adjusted. Their resources could if necessary be enriched. Central planning and coordination are essential. Advantages and disadvantages are similar to, but less critical then, those for Model A.

Model C. Planned decentralization. In which the provision of material is allocated between libraries on a systematic basis. Advantages are: direct transmission of many requests; resources can serve both local and national needs; low additional costs of provision.

Disadvantages include:

possibly high total costs because of extensive duplication; possible conflict between lending and other functions; need to adjust procedures to give an efficient service.

Superimposition of specialization on general libraries has numerous disadvantages, and interlending systems based on cooperative acquisition schemes do not have a good record.

Model D. Unplanned decentralization. In most countries, the existing resources of libraries are made available by means of union catalogues. In spite of apparent economies, there are numerous disadvantages. Neither less common documents nor documents in heavy use can be easily provided; substantial resources are necessary to maintain the union catalogues; the first responsibility of cooperating libraries is to their clients, not to interlending; there is no way of ensuring that provision matches demand; hidden costs are high; and effectiveness is likely to be low.

Composite models of provision. Since even a high degree of centralization cannot by itself achieve an ideal performance, either for current or (especially) past publications, Models A or B need to be supported by other systems on the lines of Models C or D or both. Models C or D may support one another.

Centralization of access. This can be achieved only with a national interlending centre to which many or most requests can be directed. Such a centre may be linked to a national loan collection, or it may be responsible for maintaining the main union catalogues. Access may also be partly centralized (possible in Model B), or totally decentralized (usual in Models C and D).

Union catalogues may perform a minor role in support of a central lending collection, or may be maintained in unpublished form by a centre, or published, or, if automated, consulted on-line. Published union catalogues can be very expensive, although Computer Output Microform and ISBN lists with location codes can greatly reduce costs. There should be as few union catalogues as possible, planned as a system rather than allowed to develop independently.

National or regional (sub-national). Interlending can be organized nationally or regionally. Regional systems may be appropriate in federal countries, and in very large countries with problems of communication over long distances, when loss rates in transmission are significant, in countries with different languages and cultures, and in countries where the volume of interlending is very high and library provision is plentiful. They should generally be avoided because of the inevitable duplication of resources and the problems and costs of organization and coordination.

Hierarchical nature. Hierarchy may be of provision or of access. Hierarchical provision can take several forms, with a national lending collection either at the apex or at the base. Hierarchy of access can be slow and costly if many requests fail at the first level, and may be best if not rigidly imposed.

Unity of provision to all libraries. There may be practical or historical reasons for separate interlending systems, but they are rarely justifiable, because of duplication and the delays caused if requests have to be switched from one system to another. Overall monitoring of demand and supply is difficult to achieve with divided systems.

Unity for provision for all types of literature. Central loan collections can aim to cover all material, or can be limited by subject, language, date or form. A restricted central collection should concentrate first on recent scientific and technological journals, on which most demand falls and which are easy to supply.

A system of concentration on a few libraries would probably be based on some specialization in the first place.

Since it is easy to justify central loan collections for certain types of material, mixed models AC and AD may be attractive.

FACTORS TELLING AGAINST EFFICIENT NATIONAL INTERLENDING SYSTEMS

The elimination of factors that tell against efficient interlending would clearly be of significant benefit.

Factors associated with failure to satisfy requests

Unavailability of requested item in a country

Inability to locate item

Unavailable at location when requested

Item not loanable

Factors associated with delay

At requesting library:

Inefficient internal procedures

Checking of requests

Need to select source of supply

Use of different forms and procedures for requests to different sources

In transmission:

Long distance

Slow communications

At supplying library:

Inefficient internal procedures

Need to handle a variety of forms or procedures

Requests with inadequate information

Failure to supply

Factors associated with high costs

Inefficient internal procedures

Variety of forms and procedures

Checking of inadequate or inaccurate requests

Selection of possible source of supply

Need to send requests to several sources

Need to make more than one application

Expensive transmission of request (must be weighed against extra speed)

Expensive transmission of document

Reclaiming and accounting procedures

Union catalogues

Provision of adequate document resources for loan or photocopy

These factors are of course interrelated and their importance will vary from country to country. Steps taken to reduce one problem could increase another. However, improvements in some aspects are independent of others. Planning at a national level, for example to standardize procedures, would reduce the effect of many of these factors. So would the establishment of a national loan centre, and the improvement of union catalogues. Comprehensive central collections could achieve the greatest impact, but their cost may rule them out. Greater efficiency in local libraries, and more use of photocopies in place of loans are desirable.

OTHER ASPECTS OF INTERLENDING SYSTEMS

Efficient systems in neighbouring countries may permit a lower level of national self-sufficiency, but the willingness and ability of the neighbouring system to handle present and future demands must be established. Great caution is desirable before relying substantially on other countries and then perhaps as a short term solution.

National interlending programmes and national acquisition programmes are closely related and should be planned together. Where no acquisition programme exists this must be taken into account. Where a strong programme exists the interlending system may be built on it. Model C implies a strong national acquisition programme. Model A can exist independently of, or even render unnecessary, such a programme. Model B can be independent or part of a national acquisition

programme. National interlending systems and national repository programmes also need to be considered together, and provision should be made to ensure that material withdrawn from libraries is subsequently available. A Model A collection is a national recipient for such material. Model B and to a lesser extent Model C, can also meet this need.

MECHANICS AND PROCEDURES OF INTERLENDING

Mechanics and procedures are affected by local requirements and by the design of the total interlending system. Outline procedures for both requesting and supplying libraries are given, to indicate the main elements likely to be present and to serve as a checklist. Attention is drawn to the items of stationery involved at various stages; it is shown how the number of forms and the amount of typing or writing can be kept to a minimum. The design and use of the interlending request form requires special attention.

CONCLUSIONS

There is a need for considerable improvement, and some times radical change, in the interlending systems of many developed countries, and an equal need for developing countries to build effective interlending systems into their national library plans. Interlending must now be regarded as an issue deserving consideration on its own right and total systems must be planned.

Model A - a dedicated centralized collection - has many advantages, but its costs alone may rule it out except in large developed countries with substantial demand. However, there may be a strong case for partial collections. Combined reference/lending collections should be seriously considered, especially for developing countries.

Model B - concentration of demand on a few libraries - is a cheaper alternative to Model A. It may be satisfactory for smaller developed countries, or for some developing countries.

Model C, planned decentralization, is suitable for some large developed countries that already have a sound basis for it. It is not recommended for other countries.

Model D, unplanned decentralization, is by definition not an efficient alternative. Its main value is as a support for strong Models A or B.

Union catalogues are essential where access to more than 2 or 3 libraries is required. They need to be carefully planned, designed and coordinated if they are to be effective and efficient. Comprehensiveness of coverage of libraries is much less important than optimal coverage of titles.

Regionalization of interlending systems is not generally desirable. Any benefits in speedier transportation are likely to be outweighed by the need to switch requests and by the problems and costs of duplication and organization.

All types of recorded knowledge need to be provided for, though not necessarily by the same system. Strong central coordination is necessary to ensure the availability of all forms of material.

Hierarchies, of provision or of access, will exist with mixed models. A recognized order of requesting seems desirable, which can be by-passed in cases of urgency.

Two possible models that might be appropriate for a developing country are:

Model 1 would consist of a central core collection of 5,000 science and technology journals organized to give a fast service. Humanities and social science journals would be supplied by the national reference library, possibly supported by selected specialist collections. Other materials would be supplied from a combined national reference/loan collection, supported by unpublished union catalogues of selected libraries. The national library would serve as the national interlending centre, with a dedicated loan collection of national imprints.

In Model 2, provision for science and technology would be concentrated on 3 or 4 specialist libraries in government-funded research centres, planned to provide at least 5,000 core journals, adequate photocopying facilities, and with sufficient duplication of documents to serve both local and distant users. They would be backed up by union lists of selected libraries.

Humanities and social science documents would be provided from a combined reference/loan collection, supported by unpublished union catalogues of selected libraries. Again, the national library would serve as an interlending centre, with a dedicated collection of national imprints.

Some countries face serious obstacles in interlending, including personal liability on the part of the head librarian for all material lent, inadequate photocopying equipment, and shortage of foreign currency, which can make borrowing from other countries difficult. A more general and urgent problem is copyright legislation; copying fees and the need to obtain permission from publishers can increase costs and delays.

The needs of authors, publishers, libraries and users that should be reconciled so the flow of information is not hindered.

Other aspects of importance are the collection of interlending statistics, for planning and for regular monitoring of services; the question of payment, which needs to be considered at an early stage in planning - payment gives borrowing libraries an incentive to ensure they are not borrowing what should be bought, and supplying libraries an incentive to give a good service; and interlending centres, which are needed whatever system is planned. Their role may be limited to the functions of coordination, monitoring and modification, and serving as a focus for international transactions or they may handle most of the interlending demand in their countries. Since planning for interlending should be undertaken as part of national library planning an interlending centre should be linked with any national library planning centre.

THE INTERNATIONAL PROVISION AND SUPPLY OF PUBLICATIONS

INTRODUCTION

Ideally this study would have been based on a substantial collection of valid and reliable data on the present situation, and on a detailed set of projections for the future. The severe deficiency of statistics made such an approach impossible.

This report has been based on as full a statement of the present situation as could be obtained from readily available information: the collections of statistics made by the IFLA Office for International Lending, and published articles relating to international lending and its operation. This was supplemented by small surveys, and a questionnaire sent to existing centres of international supply. Studies of transmission times between countries were conducted. By use of this information several possible patterns of international availability were identified, and an analysis made of their relative advantages and disadvantages.

WORLDWIDE AVAILABILITY : THE NEED FOR IMPROVEMENT

International lending, the main indicator of the need for international availability, appears to have grown rapidly in recent years and will continue to grow. Even improvements in national systems will not halt this growth, since good national systems stimulate demand and although a larger proportion of requests may be satisfied nationally, the number of requests sents abroad will increase. The potential increase in demand is much greater in developing than in developed countries.

Standardized international procedures for supplying documents, including designated national centres, clearly improve international availability. However, improvements in provision are also necessary. The concept of international planning has already been accepted at a regional level. Planning for worldwide availability, with a view to the foreseeable future, is now desirable.

FACTORS RELEVANT TO THE PLANNING OF INTERNATIONAL AVAILABILITY

Requirements of an international supply system

An international availability system requires the initial provision of material, its location and its supply. The main criteria for judging alternative systems are satisfaction rate, speed of supply and cost. These will depend to a large extent on efficient national systems. The total system should be politically stable and economically sound, and robust enough to cope with fluctuations in demand, but it must act only as a support to national systems, not as a substitute. The international system, however, should ideally be exhaustive, ie ultimately capable of supplying any published document.

Nature of international demand

International demand is likely to include more 'difficult' requests, ie those that national systems find hard to satisfy. It might be expected to include a higher proportion of books than national demand, since journals are more easily provided at the national level and can usually be copied; this is however not the case at present as provision of journals in many countries is inadequate. It is difficult to extend provision of older material, although access to it can sometimes be improved.

Some documents no longer exist, others cannot be located, and yet others cannot be lent. Delays occur through inefficient procedures in requesting institutions, national systems and supply libraries, and also because of poor postal systems and customs. Better internal processing of requests, and the greatest possible use of photocopies and of airmail, are the main improvements libraries can make.

Cost recovery

Free international lending is good in principle, but there are many arguments against it. Interlending cannot in fact be 'free', because costs are incurred. Cost recovery for international lending gives an incentive to improve national systems to an economic level, and to supply documents quickly and willingly. Methods of payment must however be kept simple, and charges can be waived where transactions are roughly in balance at a low level.

Developments in national systems

National systems, which will inevitably develop at different rates and to different levels, can never all achieve an equal capability for document supply, since the size of countries as well as their level of development will differ. Nevertheless all countries can expect to contribute to international availability to some extent. Immediate plans should be based on the assumption that large developed and very large developing countries are the most likely to improve their national systems rapidly in the near future - and thus to contribute most to international availability.

Developments in technology

Present modes of storage (print and some microform) and of transmission of documents (mail) are likely to remain dominant for at least another twenty years. Digitally produced documents may however be transmitted in this form on a wide scale by the year 2000. Transmission of requests by Telex and computer links, together with on-line access to union catalogues, will soon become common.

Time-scale of planning

In the next 5-10 years, only a few countries are likely to improve document supply greatly; in the next 20 years, most national systems should improve, but still only a limited number (up to 10) will be likely to serve other countries extensively. These developments need to be integrated with plans for the long term future, when technological developments will play a larger role. Meanwhile, improved availability of conventional documents over the next 20 years is necessary.

THE PRESENT POSITION

The published literature of international interlending relates largely to Europe; information on developing countries, North America and Australasia is rare. Descriptions of international lending over the years indicate considerable growth in volume, but little change in systems. On a more general level, guidelines for procedure and practical handbooks have been published, while discussions of cost recovery, union catalogues, national and regional collections, increasing use of photocopies, and the influence of new technologies have appeared in print.

There is a shortage of statistics on international lending, but three surveys have been carried out by the IFLA Office for International Lending; the data refer to 1972-73, 1976 and 1978. In countries where international lending is not centralized, statistical information is very poor. This makes estimates of total international traffic unreliable: the best guess is perhaps one million a year. Much international lending is between neighbouring countries, but there are also many transactions with very distant countries.

Overall growth is certainly high, even in countries where total figures are small. Satisfaction rates vary widely, from 65% to 95% for both requesting and supply countries. Speed of supply also varies greatly, from 2 weeks to over 6 months. Typical supply times are 5-9 weeks, but the reasons for this slow supply are not fully known.

Centres of international supply

A separate study was made of 15 major international centres. Most major international supply centres were originally set up with a national role, and several of the largest suppliers specialize in particular subject categories. The 15 centres studied handle perhaps three quarters of all international transactions.

Only 2 centres received more than 25,000 international requests in 1979: the Centre National de la Recherche Scientifique in Paris and the British Library Lending Division. The latter received over 70% of the requests received by all 15 centres. Nine of the centres each received more than 10,000 requests from other countries. Comparative figures show that not only is international lending increasing faster than national lending but demand on a limited number of centres is increasing faster than international lending generally. Satisfaction rates and speed of supply are also better from these 15 centres than is the case generally. The largest suppliers were making similar charges for their international services and were recovering approximately their marginal costs: no centre was anywhere near recovering the full cost of its overseas service.

Transmission methods for requests and documents were generally conservative; Telex and computer links were little used. However, airmail was used to despatch documents by almost all the centres.

Over 75% of requests were for journals. Journal requests would be expected to be concentrated on the largest centres, unlike books, which are usually more scattered among libraries. Only a few centres mainly receive requests for documents not published in their own country. Many centres receive much of

their demand from countries in the same region, but it is also clear that some supply centres are capable of satisfying a high proportion of requests from anywhere in the world.

Scandinavia

The Scandinavian countries, which have unusually close ties, have a unique co-operative structure, which can be treated back 50 years. A cooperative acquisition plan for peripheral literature (the Scandia Plan) has given way to a current emphasis on improved location of documents through an improved network of union catalogues and a Nordic union catalogue of periodicals. Despite its achievements, no systematic overall plan for provision of documents in the region has yet been produced.

Grey literature

'Grey literature' - documents that are not issued through the normal publishing channels - presents special problems of acquisition and provision. NTIS issues US-sponsored technical reports; VINITI has a depository service for unpublished research reports in the USSR; the British Library Lending Division attempts to cover grey literature of all kinds, especially that published in the UK. SIGLE, the EEC System for Information on Grey Literature in Europe, is a recent development aimed at controlling grey literature on an international level. Grey agricultural literature is covered to a certain extent by the AGRIS and AGLINET services.

Commercial suppliers

Commercial suppliers, mainly in the USA, are offering an alternative source to traditional channels for document supply. Although they do not yet operate on a large scale internationally, they could extend their services in this area in the future, particularly with the growth of international on-line bibliographic search services linked with commercial document suppliers. Such services, concentrated on the journals in highest demand, could conflict with international library plans for document supply.

TRANSMISSION TIMES BETWEEN COUNTRIES

Speed of supply is vital to an efficient interlending system. Although most delays occur at present in requesting and supplying libraries, it is important to know whether and how, independent of such delay, the distance between countries affects the speed of supply. To assess actual transmission times, two surveys were conducted in 1979-80, one at the British Library Lending Division and the other in six Asian countries.

The results of the first of these two surveys showed the overall mean time for requests to reach the Lending Division to be 9.3 days. With one or two exceptions, differences between various regions of the world were small. There is less than one day's difference between UK-Western Europe and UK-Far East and -Australasia. Transmission times were also found for loans and photocopies despatched from the Lending Division to various countries. For photocopies

the general range was again fairly narrow for different regions: loans took very little longer than photocopies when both were despatched airmail.

In the Asian literature times study, airmail letters and parcels of different weights sent at different postal rates were sent between New Delhi and major centres in Pakistan, Malaysia, Thailand, Bangladesh and Japan. Surface mail was found to be exceptionally slow. For all classes of mail, however, distance seems to be unrelated to speed of transmission. The fastest times were over the longest distance (New Delhi-Tokyo), and the slowest over the shortest distance (New Delhi-Lahore). Furthermore, times from the UK to the Asian centres appear to be as good as times from New Delhi.

With the speed of air travel between major centres around the world, the effect of distance on transmission times is not significant. The critical factor is the efficiency of postal services within the countries concerned.

ALTERNATIVE MODELS OF INTERNATIONAL AVAILABILITY

Distinctions are drawn between 'copiable' and 'non-copiable' material, since different models may be appropriate for each; and between de jure collections, set up by inter-governmental agreement, and de facto collections, which may serve international needs without being dependent for their existence on international support. The latter might however be given international recognition. Distinction is also made between systems that require cooperation and those that do not. Whatever international provision may be made, every country should be able to supply its own imprints and should have a national centre or centres for international transactions.

Worldwide collection(s)

A single comprehensive worldwide collection is theoretically possible but practically unrealistic. It could not achieve comprehensive acquisition of publications from all countries, most of the material would remain unused, and a single collection might be vulnerable. Such a centre would also have to receive international financial support (ie be a de jure source); otherwise it would have to recover its total costs, in which case libraries would use cheaper sources. A more realistic concept is a worldwide collection that would satisfy 90% of demand, which would nearly all be for copiable documents, especially journals. Such a collection would not be total and would need to be supported by other systems.

Another possible pattern would consist of several 'worldwide' collections, preferably in different continents and with strong holdings of the publications of their regions. They would concentrate on journals, report literature and conference proceedings, but would acquire books selectively. Such centres could be competing de facto collections.

Regional collections

Regional collections can be regionally-based worldwide collections, mentioned above, or collections geared specifically to regional needs, in which case they would probably be de jure collections. Regional collections may apparently benefit from similar needs and common backgrounds. However, the financial, organizational and possibly political problems are very formidable, and the advantages are not clear.

Country of publication as main source

Since comprehensive collections are impractical, the cardinal principle that every country must be able to supply its national imprints should be pursued. However, application to the country of publication for all items would be cumbersome and give a very uneven response. It is more pragmatic to use good, fast sources of supply for most requests, but this should not be allowed to weaken the incentive for improving national provision and supply.

Cooperative systems

A cooperative scheme for provision, or indeed union catalogues, on a worldwide scale would be toally impractical, except as a partial solution for publications in selected subjects or forms. Within a region, different countries might be responsible for different categories of literature, but this would depend on continued voluntary acquisition unless a corporate fund could be established. Political stability and efficient organization would also be vital. Regional union catalogues would be unlikely to compare for cost or efficiency with alternative means of supply. Regional cooperation of various kinds can however extend availability, and operational or planned cooperative schemes should be assessed in comparison with alternative means of improving provision.

A hypothetical 'ideal' solution

An 'ideal' solution for journals and other copiable material would seem to be several worldwide collections in different parts of the world. These would be comprehensive de facto collections, formed primarily to serve the national needs of countries with an existing or potential very large demand, and thus requiring no special planning and no cooperative funding (direct costs would be recovered). Aid to developing countries might best take the form of supporting their use of such collections rather than of subsidy for regional cooperative schemes. These comprehensive collections could co-exist with subject specialization collections. Nearly all journals would be covered between the worldwide centres, but countries of publication could supply the small remainder. Books could also be supplied from worldwide collections to some extent: speed of supply would not be affected if airmail were used, but this is expensive over long distances. The most reasonable alternative source for books is the country of publication.

The pattern of supply for journals would be as follows. The user library would send its requests to its national centre; the centre would pass unsatisfied requests to its nearest worldwide collection; requests still unsatisfied would be sent on to the worldwide collection covering the country of publication; finally, any requests remaining unsatisfied would be passed to the country of

publication. In the case of books, the national centre would use its judgment as to whether to approach a worldwide centre likely to hold the requested items, or to send the requests direct to the country of publication, which would in any case act as a last resort.

The development of such a pattern of availability requires no radical new system or change of policy. Worldwide collections can be built on existing collections, and the responsibility of each country for supply of its own publications is already accepted in principle. As well as advantages in satisfaction rate, speed and cost, such a system has the merit of being based on present realities and thus avoiding the problems and delay in setting up and maintaining cooperative ventures.

An alternative strategy

'Worldwide' collections of the kind envisaged require action by individual countries, which may not be taken. An alternative strategy would involve a continuing use of existing worldwide collections, and a parallel development of international or regional voluntary cooperative systems based on a distribution of provision among countries and libraries. Such a development would also be patchy and disorganized without some guidance and coordination, and means of achieving this should be studied. Extensive funding would be necessary to bring about substantial improvements on a worldwide scale. This alternative strategy could be a long-term alternative or an interim solution pending a pattern of provision closer to the 'ideal' above.

CONCLUSIONS

An international system of document supply will always be needed and the volume of traffic will grow rapidly for some years. Efficiency and speed of supply depend on the libraries involved and national postal systems; distance has little or no effect. Demand appears to be concentrated on a small number of centres and these centres can offer a worldwide service for journals and other copiable materials. Such centres should be based on collections needed and developed for national provision. Loans could be supplied partially by these centres, but would be made mainly from the country of publication. Cooperative schemes involving several countries are likely to offer a less satisfactory solution, but they may prove the most realistic prospect.

International availability will be improved by the development of national systems according to each country's needs. What is needed is an awareness in individual countries of their own best interests at the national level, and encouragement, assistance in planning and possibly financial help in appropriate areas. For cooperative solutions both regional and international initiatives are desirable, and external funding is needed.

It is therefore recommended that: improved collection of international lending statistics be made in each country; national centres be set up to channel requests; countries with a large national interlending demand should consider establishing national document supply centres that can also supply documents to other countries; assistance and funds be given to help develop national

supply centres in appropriate cases; cooperative schemes and plans be examined urgently and in detail, especially with a view to their performance; the feasibility of coordinating existing and planned schemes be studied; assistance in planning national acquisition and interlending systems which will be able to supply national imprints to other countries be given to developing countries; the need to pay direct costs of transactions be accepted, aid given to developing countries for this purpose and simplified payment systems be examined.

THE AVAILABILITY OF PUBLICATION IN INDIVIDUAL COUNTRIES: A PILOT STUDY IN TWO COUNTRIES

INTRODUCTION

The study had two aims: to assess levels of availability in individual countries by examining their acquisition policies and practices, interlending systems and performance and by identifying particular problems or barriers to availability; and to develop, test and refine a suitable methodology for wider application.

Information on acquisition policies and practices, interlending policies and barriers to availability was derived from personal structured interviews with a wide range of librarians, while information on interlending performance was based on a survey of the interlibrary loan demands placed upon a significant number of libraries over a number of weeks, and on a survey of individuals, the documents they wished to see, the extent to which they were requested and supplied and the reasons for not requesting some documents.

COUNTRY 1

ACQUISITION: POLICY AND PRACTICES

There is no national acquisitions policy, either established by a central body or agreed between libraries. No evidence of cooperation was found, though it was mentioned as desirable by a number of librarians. Present levels of funding do not allow libraries to go beyond, or in some cases reach, basic levels of essential material.

The national library does not house the most significant collection, nor does it play a dominant role in the development and coordination of library services. It has no acquisition budget but relies upon legal deposit (estimated at 30%) to build up a collection of national imprints and produce the national bibliography, which is several years in arrears.

Other institutions at the national level play a more positive role. A National Scientific and Technical Documentation Centre includes document provision - partly from its own limited stock - the compilation of bibliographies, arranging translations and facilitating contact between researchers. To remedy inadequate provision in the field of health care a National Medical Information and Documentation Centre was established. It aims to build up a comprehensive collection

of world biomedical and related literature, to develop a biomedical library network, to provide interlibrary loans, and to provide training. A National Science Library has recently been established, and an investigation into services in the agricultural field is currently being conducted.

There is no cooperation between university libraries in the acquisition of material. Each acquires material to meet its own needs, primarily in the teaching fields as the amount of research is not substantial. Each university determines allocations to its libraries and amounts vary (1979) from ca US$20,500 per annum to ca US$130,000 per annum. The proportion available in foreign currency is determined by government and varies between institutions, but is rarely in line with the amount of material that has to be acquired from abroad. Use of Unesco coupons is limited. The need to buy foreign material locally with local currency converted at an artificial exchange rate reduces the purchasing power of budgets. The lack of research means that universities publish little and cannot benefit significantly from exchange agreements. The presentation of material by aid agencies, diplomatic and cultural missions is more important, though recipients have little say in the choice of material.

There is no overall system of public library provision. A variety of agencies provide a limited service. There are many rural and some urban areas with no library service. The total number of public libraries is estimated at 177, one library for every 106,000 literate people; they provide on average one book for every two literate people.

The number of special libraries is estimated at between 80 and 100, of which some 20 are of any consequence. Most are of recent creation. The quality of staff ranges from the untrained to some of the most talented librarians in the country. Acquisition policies are geared to the needs of individual institutions. The coordination of subscriptions to foreign periodicals takes place between three of the best libraries in the country. Research organizations tend to publish significant quantities of material which can be used for exchange.

INTERLENDING : POLICY AND PRACTICE

Interlending exists on a minimal basis. There is no formal national policy nor any wide-ranging agreement established between libraries. The lending of originals is limited by the small size of collections, often limited to basic material needed by local users, lack of information on holdings, the lack of an agreed code and procedures, a postal service that does not inspire confidence and personal responsibility of librarians for their stocks. Some lending takes place within small geographic areas using messengers, but many librarians offer reference services only, though these may be available to the public. The provision of photocopies is limited by lack of equipment and staff, the difficulties of having equipment serviced, obtaining spare parts and paper.

BARRIERS TO AVAILABILITY

Local publishing is relatively limited and there is a high reliance on imports. Books may be imported by licences obtained from the government which determine the amount of foreign currency that can be used, and the type of material that can be imported. Methods for allocating foreign currency are often slow. Subscriptions to periodicals may be delayed and back issues may be impossible to obtain. Significant loss rates in transit are reported. Material from abroad is usually sent by surface mail, which is slow. The training of librarians is weak; several courses are available but they are very traditional in nature. Locally trained librarians with inadequate budgets cannot offer a good service; they are held in low esteem and continue to receive small budgets. Greater efforts can be made by librarians within existing resources. Librarians trained abroad tend to feel frustrated on their return by the lack of resources. The communications network is a significant barrier; there is a danger of loss in transit if postal services are used, and the telephone service, which is used to verify holdings and arrange loans, is unreliable.

THE EXISTING DEMAND FOR PUBLICATIONS

A questionnaire was sent to 21 libraries having a significant involvement in the supply of material to other institutions. All were requested to monitor requests received from other institutions for a period of ten weeks. Replies were received from 14. The total number of items requested was 310 and the total volume of interlending in the country is estimated at less than 2,000 items per year. Requests came primarily from academic institutions (45%) and from research organizations (34%); individuals accounted for 20%: 81% of requests came from the capital.Books accounted for 28%, journals 53%, other printed material 5% and non-print material 15% though the last probably includes microforms. Science and technology, including medicine and agriculture, accounted for 91% of requests, but this is influenced by the nature of the responding libraries. Demand falls primarily on English language material. Of requests specifying a date of publication, half were for pre-1976 material and half for post-1975; surprisingly high proportions of older material were requested in agriculture, pure sciences and technology. The satisfaction rate is shown to be 98%. Prior checking on the availability of material filters out some requests and replies from some institutions showed no failures when this is known to be extremely unlikely. A significant quantity of requests were satisfied the day they were received or within five days.

THE POTENTIAL DEMAND FOR PUBLICATIONS

225 researchers were asked to monitor all references identified during their work for a period of four weeks. They were asked to note the characteristics of the material and say whether the item was pursued and how if not, to give the reason. Replies were received from only 15%, and great caution must be exercised in interpreting results. Of particular significance is the fact that 25% of references were not pursued; the major reason given (73%) was the lack of a library service followed by a lack of financial resources (24%). Of the references pursued 50% were from another library, 22% by personal contact, 17% through the researcher's own library, 6% by visiting other organizations and 4% on inter-library loan. Of the items pursued, 75% were satisfied; two thirds of these

were from within the country. Personal contact proved more successful than inter-library loan. The majority of items took more than four weeks to be supplied. The satisfaction level and speed of supply conflict with data supplied by libraries.

COUNTRY 2

ACQUISITION: POLICY AND PRACTICE

There is no national acquisition policy. At present policies seem to be developed by libraries in isolation, though cooperation was thought desirable by a number of librarians. The institution bearing the title National Library does not play a dominant role (it is within an institute of the National University). It aims to acquire all material relating to the country but there is a concentration on humanities subjects. It receives two copies of national imprints by legal deposit; this is supplemented by a relatively small acquisitions budget. Coverage of the national bibliography is estimated at 50-60%.
CONACYT was established in 1970 to promote scientific and technological development and to develop information systems and resources in these fields. It is involved with the training of librarians. It has developed local ability to use computerized services, and is developing local data bases. It is involved in the computerization of the national bibliography and has updated a Union List of Serials covering over 34,500 titles in 157 libraries. INFOTEC, a part of CONACYT, promotes information as an economic resource. Bibliographic access is supported by document provision.

Other institutions functioning at the national level include a National Centre for Health Information and Documentation, which has exclusive access to MEDLARS and relies on other organizations to provide the supporting documents; a National Institute of Agricultural Research, though this does not coordinate its library source with those of other agricultural institutes; and a National Institute for Nuclear Research, which functions as a national centre of information and bibliographic services on nuclear fields.

There are wide differences in the level of funding available to university libraries. Some universities are private while others depend upon the government. The libraries also vary significantly in quality. A few are of very high quality, with good stocks which are exploited as a major resource and are integrated into teaching programmes. At the other extreme are some that must contend with a lack of professional staff and insufficient holdings. Most collections are on closed access and the proliferation of departmental libraries is often inadequately planned and coordinated. Duplication is sometimes unnecessarily high. Each library buys material to meet its own needs and no evidence was found of cooperation between universities, or indeed sometimes between departments of the same university, in the acquisition of material, though a number of librarians do not subscribe to periodicals if they know they can be borrowed from elsewhere. Much of the material held is in English.

The Directorate General of Libraries and Publications in the Ministry of Public Education is responsible for the coordination and development of school and public libraries. It is directly responsible for 139 libraries, and a further 70 come under indirect control. There are 360 libraries run by states. Most are reference collections only and school libraries have yet to be developed to any

extent. The Ministry has undertaken detailed surveys to assess present resources and future needs. It has been allocated a considerable sum to develop and consolidate a national public library service to support regional, particularly rural development. Amongst first priorities is a training programme to double present staff.

The range of libraries to be included under the heading of special libraries is considerable. Almost all are located in the capital and the environs and 90% of them belong to government agencies which, together with universities, absorb some 80% of the total budget allocated to libraries in the country. They range from small scale specialized centres with low budgets and few staff to very much larger organization controlling networks of libraries with large budgets and considerable numbers of trained professional staff. None of the special libraries surveyed cooperated with others in the acquisition of material, though some are working in very closely related fields. Selection thus aims to meet the immediate needs of the relevant institution, and varies from being the sole responsibility of the librarian to formal or informal contact between the library and members of the institution.

INTERLENDING: POLICY AND PRACTICE

There is no official interlending system as such. Interlending is arranged either on a bilateral basis between institutions or, more generally, within the code of practice elaborated by an association of libraries of research institutes and higher education. All libraries in membership of the Association are required to participate: not all comply. The code provides definitions and a minimum of directions and obligations while allowing libraries to make further arrangements according to their needs. It deals with the responsibilities of requesting and supplying libraries and allows for suspension of the service and sanctions in cases of non-compliance. Libraries are expected to make known their collections by published directories, but this is rarely achieved. Interlending is limited in volume; many libraries will not lend original material, though the supply of photocopies is much more common.

Many libraries allow public access to their collections, usually for reference services only. Libraries that lend often restrict that activity to the immediate locality. The postal service is not widely used for loans; it is thought to be slow and unreliable, though a number of libraries reported no difficulties. Air or bus services are used in preference. It is often quicker to obtain items from abroad than from within the country. Loans are usually supplied free, photocopies usually at cost.

BARRIERS OF AVAILABILITY

Many publications have to be obtained from abroad. Supply by surface mail is slow while supply by air can present customs difficulties. Indigenous publishing is dominated by translations. The quality of many is felt to be doubtful and original publications are often preferred though they are very much more expensive. The lack of effective bibliographic control by the local book trade makes the purchase of local publications difficult.

At the end of each term of office, the replacing of the President is accompanied by the departure of many senior officials. This lack of continuity means that planning is often limited to objectives that can be met during a six-year term of office.

The lack of trained staff is a major constraint. The courses that exist and are proposed will not be able to overcome this shortage.

THE EXISTING DEMAND FOR PUBLICATIONS

The same methodology was adopted as in Country 1. 40 libraries were asked to monitor requests. Replies were received from 15. The total number of requests was 1,349. The total annual volume of interlending is estimated with caution as being in the region of 50,000. Of replies received 63% were from research organizations, 34% from academic institutions. The majority of requests originated in the capital (97%). Requests were mainly for books (67%) rather than journals (27%), but this reflects the predominance in the sample of social sciences (61%) and humanities (8%). However books predominate also in medicine (62%), agriculture (67%) and are quite high in technology (41%). National imprints when place of publication was given, accounted for a third of requests and 91% were satisfied. English language material, notably USA imprints, accounted for 27%. Of requests specifying a date of publication, 71% were published before 1976. The overall satisfaction level was 84%. As in Country 1, prior verification of holdings filters out some requests and further requests are filtered out by an expectation of failure to borrow material from distant locations. Where data was provided it was shown that 88% of material supplied was handled the day the request was received.

THE POTENTIAL DEMAND FOR PUBLICATIONS

Again the methodology used in Country 1 was adopted. 210 researchers were asked to cooperate, but replies were received from only 12. Meaningful data cannot therefore be desired. However, it was noted that only 4% of references were not pursued. Of those pursued 29% were pursued through the researcher's own library, and 52% by personal contact; 2% were requested from other libraries. 35% of items pursued are shown to be satisfied, 40% were supplied from within the country and 28% from foreign sources (32% did not specify the source of supply). The vast majority of requests took over 4 weeks to satisfy.

CONCLUSIONS

The possible lack of familiarity of the consultant with local conditions was balanced by local assistants providing much background information and advice. A local body might have secured a better response rate from libraries, but not necessarily from researchers. Direct discussions with librarians (check-lists were used to ensure systematic coverage) allowed flexibility and the informality encouraged libraries to be more forthcoming on a wider range of issues. Questions could be modified and amplified for maximum effect. Postal questionnaires may yield less information, which may have to be judged in isolation, and require adequate communications. They will be necessary in developed countries with a

greater number of libraries.

Barriers could be dealt with in discussions more easily and fully than by questionnaire which may be directed to specific departments to the detriment of wider issues. The questionnaires to libraries were undoubtedly understood and, when taken together with discussions, covered all the characteristics necessary for an understanding of interlending. Other aspects can be included and greater detail requested. Manipulation of the data can be fuller. The methodology can be used at the national and local level. Sufficient samples are needed, especially when subsets or cells are involved, though a reasonable picture can often be drawn from an imperfect response rate.

The difficulties anticipated in monitoring local researchers were confirmed. However, the importance of the survey is beyond doubt. It can supply valuable information on the use of other sources and cast doubt on the efficiency of libraries. The response rate can be improved with more time, work and money. Even a partial indication of needs can be useful. Several misconceptions might have arisen had only libraries been surveyed.